

159
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January 23, 1981

SITUATION REPORTS

POLAND

The regime and Solidarity are ready to engage in a test of strength over whether this Saturday will be a regular workday. [REDACTED]

Both sides have left open the possibility of future negotiations, but such discussions are not likely to be held in time to avert another confrontation. The regime may be prepared to endure another job boycott in the hope that enough people will come to work to constitute a setback for Solidarity. According to the regime, more than 65 percent of the work force ignored Solidarity's urgings to stay home on 10 January. [REDACTED]

The authorities may hope that another boycott will help turn public opinion against Solidarity's position on this issue. The regime probably also is intent on impressing the Soviets with its resolve. [REDACTED]

Solidarity is trying to increase pressure on the regime to convince it that the unions will, in fact, score a major victory. Union spokesmen claim that yesterday's "warning" strikes were more extensive than planned; similar actions are being held today. Solidarity leaders may calculate that the broadening of the demands associated with the strike tomorrow will prompt more people to stay home. [REDACTED]

Despite this posturing, both Solidarity and the regime are not far apart. In response to the regime's proposal of a 42.5-hour workweek, Solidarity offered on Wednesday a 41.5-hour workweek. [REDACTED]

More importantly, union leader Walesa and even some of his more militant colleagues have expressed understanding for Poland's economic plight. As for the regime, several important officials, including a deputy prime minister, have publicly admitted that the regime mishandled the issue by not consulting enough with Solidarity. [REDACTED]

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Approved [REDACTED] Release [REDACTED]
Date [REDACTED] 1981
144
159

NID 81

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Resolution of the workweek issue, however, will be complicated in that it has become linked to an overall evaluation of regime compliance with promises made in the Gdansk accords last August. Compromise could be reached with the establishment of a permanent joint working group that Prime Minister Pinkowski reportedly proposed on Wednesday. Such a committee would probably take up the workweek issue as its first order of business but then would move to other controversial subjects, including access to the media, economic reform, and censorship.

For such negotiations to succeed Solidarity would have to come to believe that its views on policy options were receiving serious consideration. This process could take time to develop, and there could thus be a number of apparently "unsuccessful" meetings before compromises were reached.

Other Domestic Developments

Increased strike activity by Solidarity may have helped to set off other demonstrations. Some farmers in western Poland yesterday tried to block a road with their machinery but were turned away by the police and warned not to try again. Students in Lodz in central Poland renewed a sit-in strike to press for a larger voice in the administration of the local university.

In Warsaw, the Solidarity chapter announced its intention to "commemorate" the Polish uprising against Russian rule in 1863, the first action organized by Solidarity to carry even implicit anti-Soviet overtones. In the Gdansk area, workers at a naval shipyard yesterday apparently participated in the widespread "warning" strikes and renewed their demand made in December that the Defense Minister come and discuss their grievances.

Meanwhile, the regime has refused to renew the visas of crews from three US networks and journalists from a major US magazine. The actions go beyond the symbolic moves taken against Western journalists by the government last week. We do not know if the regime has taken similar steps against European correspondents.